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Wiki Assignment #1

1. Define Action Research:

Although, action research is a popular term in the Education field, it has often been defined in numerous ways. Action research is typically a collaborative research effort among educators on a current educational issue that warrants discussion and improvement with proper action. It is reflective and allows educators to examine methodology rather than theory. Through action research educators discover ways to improve instruction, student achievement and solutions to real problems in the school setting.

There are three key components to action research 1. Inquiry 2. Discussion 3. Intervention. Inquiry: The researcher/educator will identify an issue that is researchable and pose a question or state a problem. Discussion: The researcher/educator will discuss the cause of the issue, why it is currently in a state of chaos. The researcher/educator will examine prior research conducted. Intervention: The researcher/educator will use the data collected to determine the best method of intervention; a plan of action; possible solutions to the issue.

1. Current Educational Issue/Research Topic:

Many of our students in the urban public school system are performing below their peers in suburban middle class areas. There are many factors that can be attributed to the huge academic gap between low-income and high-income students; some factors are lack of resources and/or lack of qualified teachers in poor urban schools. As educators have we considered whether our methodology has an effect on our student’s achievement? Pedagogy a familiar word in the Education field. Have we asked ourselves will students perform better in a teacher-centered instructional environment or a student-centered instructional environment? Have we stopped to consider our pedagogy and whether we are more aligned with the traditional school of education or the progressive school of education and whether the manner which we practice the art to teaching is effective for our student population.

1. Is it Researchable?

After preliminary research I came across a number of sources from well known theorist:

Callison, D. (2009). Instructional Trends from AASL Journals: 1972-2007--Part 1: From Teacher-Centered to Student-Centered. *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, *25*(8), 22-26. Retrieved from ERIC database.

Dewey, J. (1937). Education and Social Change. *Teachers College Record, Volume 3  
 Number 26,* p. 235-238.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.

Hirsch, Jr., E.D. (1987). *Cultural Literacy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Hirsch, Jr., E.D. (1977). *The Philosophy of Composition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Johnson, G., Page, W., & Project COD, N. (1971). *Helping Traditional Teachers To Plan and Implement Student Centered Classrooms; Selected Classroom Project. Final Report*. Retrieved from ERIC database.

1. Pros and Cons/ Current Instructional Strategies/ Practitioner/Theorists:

John Dewey is arguably one of the most prominent progressive educational theorists. He is probably best known for his philosophical ideas between education and social change in a democracy. According to Dewey, educational institutions need to change with society and remain fluid as society will inevitably be in a state of fluctuation. In addition, Dewey believes schools must reflect the diverse society in which we live in. Only then will schools be able to guide students to make intelligent and responsible decisions about the future of our democracy. Dewey also adds that educational institutions are overwhelmingly engaged in a systematic form of indoctrination. John Dewey believed children should explore their own beliefs when it comes to learning. He emphasized the importance of reflection in the active process of learning (Callison, 2009). Dewey believes in the progressive approach to teaching, where students are taking responsibility for their own education and the teacher’s role is to guide them.

E.D Hirsch on the other hand believes that teachers must have certain content knowledge in order to effectively teach. Although Hirsch considers himself a liberal, he has been classified as a neo-conservative and has been criticized for advocating a conservative/traditional pedagogy that does not address the diverse cultures of students, especially New York City public school students, and their learning differences. Hirsch has counter criticized the educational theories that focus on teaching intellectual tools such as, creativity, critical thinking and critical speaking instead of content. Hirsch holds these theories of schooling accountable for the lack of knowledgeable Americans. Hirsch favors a traditional approach to learning that heavily relies on textbooks, lectures, memorization and test. It seems that these different approaches are either working in some places or they are not.

1. Intervention:

The purposed intervention is to incorporate both the teacher-centered instructional method and the student centered instructional method. We will implement the research by conducting a lesson twice using both approaches to test which was more successful. Certain lessons will be teacher-directed and the students will be assessed for understanding. Certain lessons will be student-directed and the students will be assessed for understanding. We will see how students perform on both approaches and record the findings. We will also conduct surveys on which method students and teachers prefer..